Member Workshop - Casework & Complaint Management

Wednesday 20 March 2019

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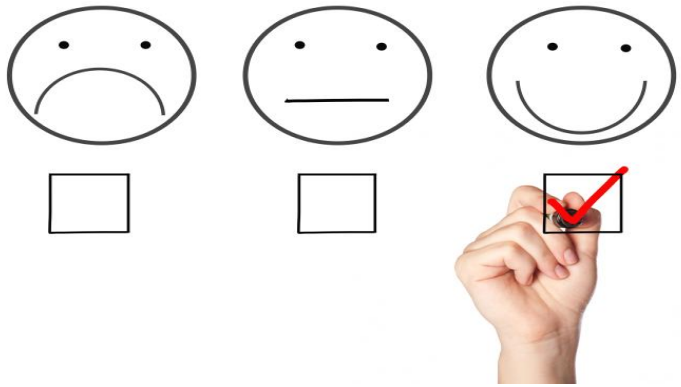
Introductions

How Members and Officers can work together with the reporting systems we operate to receive the best service and support.



Background

- Notice of Motion, 12 September 2018;

  "The Council calls on the Chief Executive to ensure that the Chief and Senior Officers respond to Councillors' requests with courtesy and good manners without any undue delay"

- Action plan developed and led personally by Colin Everett
- Interim report to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny
- Purpose of today

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Personal Reflections

- We expect member enquiries to be given priority and want to support you
- The majority of member enquiries are ‘off system’ and can be harder to track
- Balance of personal contact with known officers and using the corporate system
- Taking care not to exaggerate the situation in using individual or old case examples which are not typical
- Offer made to members to report ‘repeat offenders’; no reports received in the last six months
- Support the digital developments to give the public a quicker and more personally owned service

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Introducing “Customer Contact”

Rebecca Jones, Customer Service & Registration Manager –

Customer Contact is aligned to Gareth Owens, Chief Officer (Governance) and is responsible for the strategic Customer Services Strategy to deliver modern and efficient face to face, telephone and digital services;

Customer Services

Contact Centre

Flintshire Connects

FLINTSHIRE CONNECTS
SIR Y FFLINT YN CYSYLLTU

Welsh Translation

Cymraeg

Ombudsman Ombwdsmon
PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES
OMBWDSMON GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS CYMRU

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Process and Systems

Over 56,000 enquiries were recorded on the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) in the last 6 months.

- **Reports** e.g. missed waste collection
- **Requests** e.g. Council Tax discount
- **Applications** e.g. school admissions
- **Complaints** e.g. failure to provide a service

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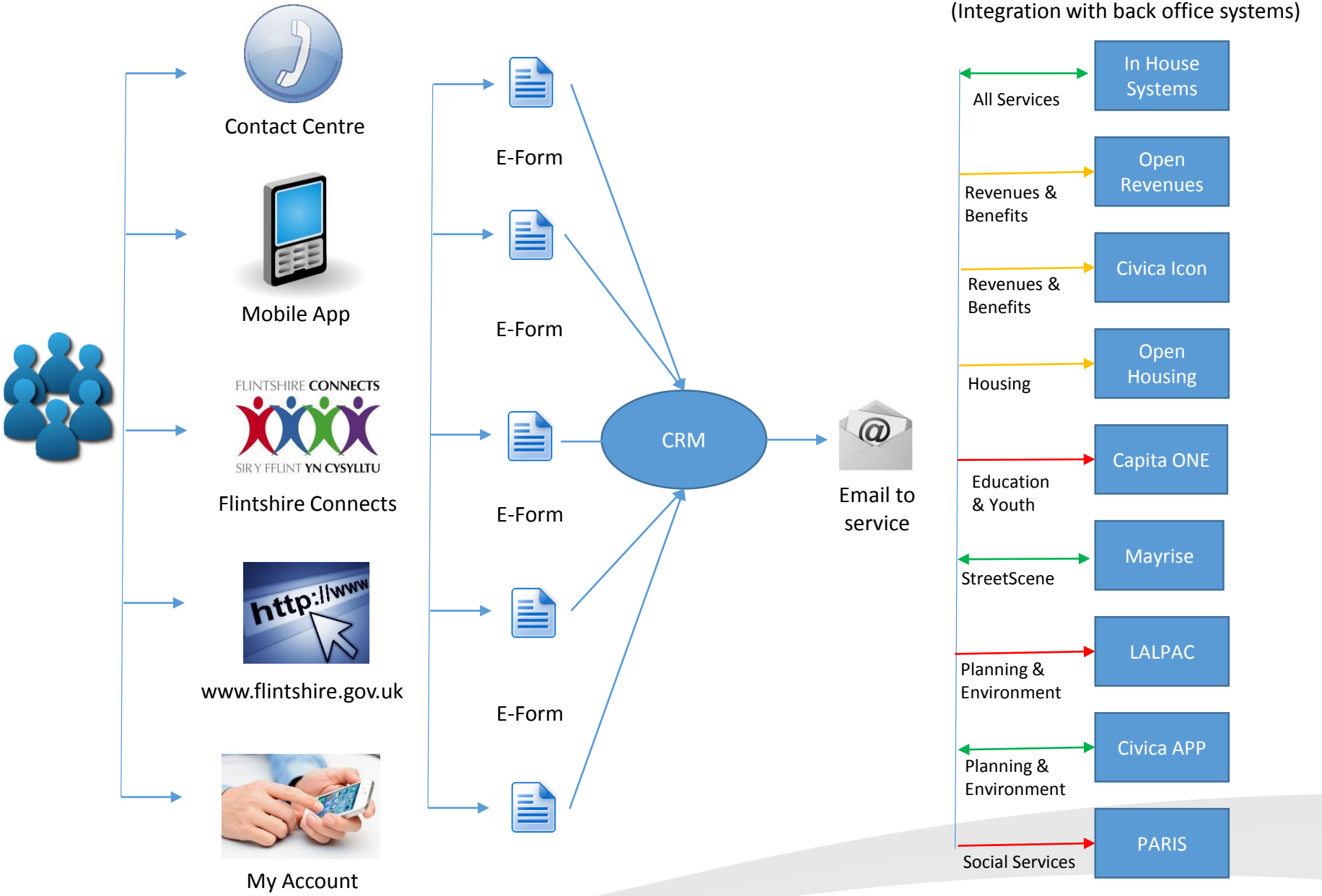
(Integration with back office systems)



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Managing Complaints

Step 1

- The service will aim to provide a full response within 10 working days from receipt.

Step 2

- The Corporate Complaints Officer or an appropriate senior officer will aim to provide a full response within 20 working days from receipt.

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Public Services Ombudsman

The Ombudsman's role is to consider whether a complainant has suffered an injustice as a result of maladministration or service failure by a body within his jurisdiction.

Early Resolution
Putting things right for a complainant at an early stage e.g. agreeing to investigate a complaint through the local complaints procedure.

OR

Investigation
A report is issued or the PSO will discontinue it as a result of action agreed by the Council.

Ombudsman Ombwdsmon
PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES
OMBWDSMON GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS CYMRU

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Performance

"The Council calls on the Chief Executive to ensure that the Chief and Senior Officers respond to Councillors' requests with courtesy and good manners ***without any undue delay****"*

September, October, November

- 25,253 enquiries received
- 92% closed

December, January, February

- 31,059 enquiries received
- 96% closed

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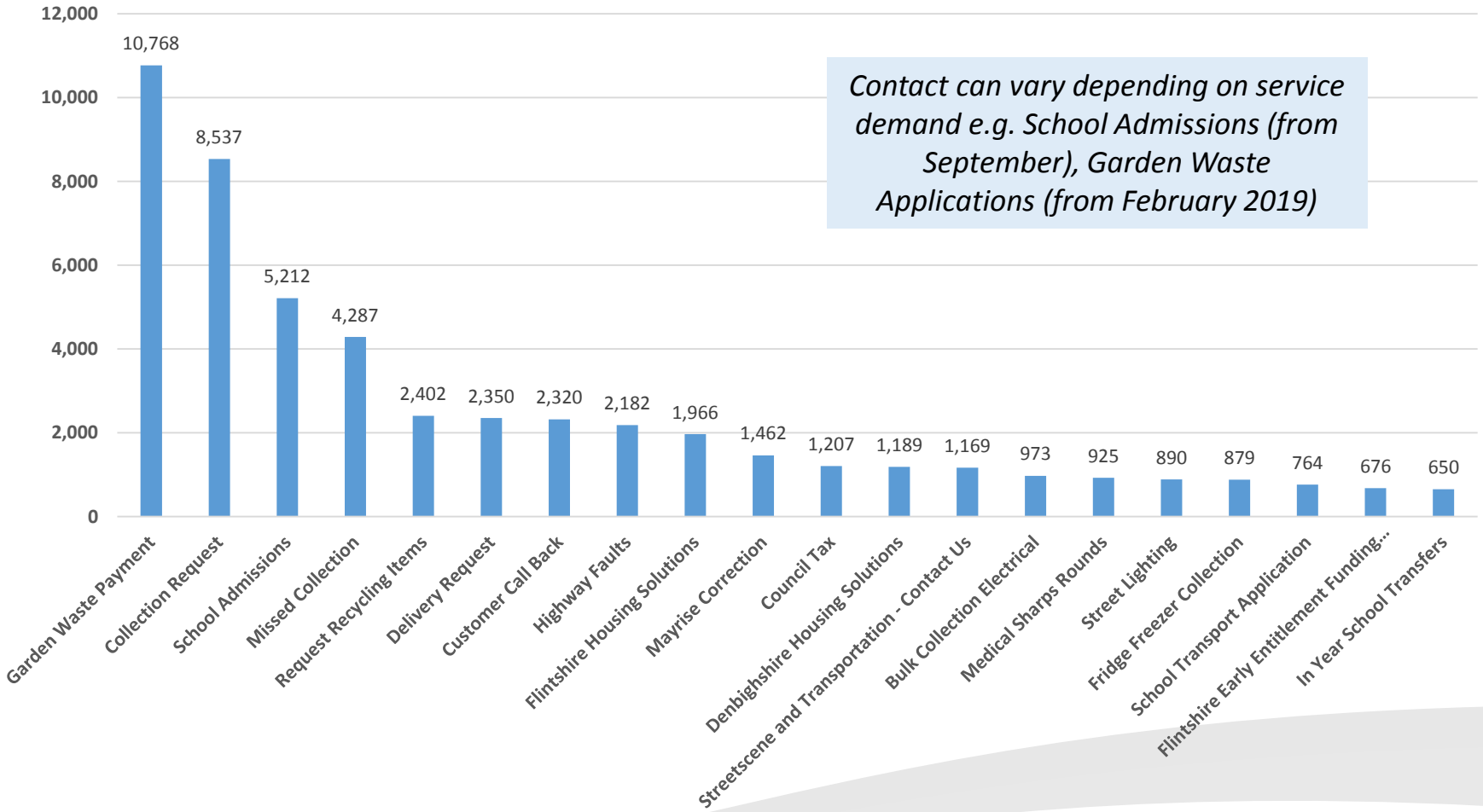
Performance (Top 20)



Contact can vary depending on service demand e.g. School Admissions (from September), Garden Waste Applications (from February 2019)

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Action Plan

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Action Plan Progress

Standards and Guidance

- ✓ Revised County Councillor Guide to Communication and Accessibility
  - ✓ Published on InfoNet and circulated to managers and key work groups
  - ✓ Definition of a request, report and complaint
  - ✓ Guidance on handling complex or sensitive matters that take longer than 10 working days
  - ✓ Introduction of escalation procedures within portfolios
  - ✓ Named officers for sensitive and complex issues
- ✓ Re-issue of Communications Standards
  - ✓ Use of email signatures
  - ✓ Mobile numbers
  - ✓ Out of office
- ✓ Guide to good complaints handling
  - ✓ Recommended house style
  - ✓ Quality control – sampling (CRM)

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Action Plan Progress

Performance Management

- ✓ Expectations raised with Chief Officers
  - ✓ Appraisal - expectations and collective ownership
- ✓ Engagement with high volume portfolio management teams
  - ✓ Streetscene & Transportation
  - ✓ Planning, Environment & Economy
  - ✓ Housing & Assets
- ✓ Business Managers engaged as a single point of contact for escalation of issues
- ✓ Dedicated contact for complex or sensitive cases
- ✓ Regular performance reports (real-time and automated in the future)
- ✓ Team meeting agenda item
- ✓ Who's Who to be reviewed

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Action Plan Progress

Working with Members

- ✓ Action Plan developed - transparent on what we are doing following the Notice of Motion
- ✓ Update to Corporate Resource Overview and Scrutiny (January 2019)
- ✓ Rebecca Jones / Joanne Pierce appointed as dedicated contacts for complex or sensitive cases
- ✓ Members invited to report service areas where there are repeat problems
- ✓ Member Workshop scheduled 20 March 2019

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Action Plan Progress

Accountability and Control

- ✓ Emphasis on Chief Officer accountability
- ✓ Action plan is a live document with tasks designed to ensure reporting systems we operate remain effective
  - ✓ Compliance with Communication Standards - on-going e.g. new employees
  - ✓ Quality assurance checks – are communications effective and of good quality?
- ✓ Regular monitoring of customer contact through team meetings

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Good Practice Guidance

Guidance issued to Officers include;

- ✓ Email communications – signatures and out of office messages
- ✓ Response times – 5 or 10 working days
- ✓ Skype – use of Outlook Calendar to identify availability
- ✓ Profile photos – officers with a high level of contact with Members encouraged to upload an appropriate photo to their Outlook account
- ✓ Telephone answering standards – 30 seconds
- ✓ Bilingual greetings
- ✓ Diverting calls or using voicemail
- ✓ Complaint guidance
- ✓ Monitoring compliance – who to report non-compliance to

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Chief Officer Updates

Streetscene & Transportation

Stephen Jones

Planning, Environment & Economy

Andrew Farrow

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Table Discussion 1

Reflecting on the updates from Chief Officers, what is your experience of working with services?

If relevant, provide specific examples where you believe undue delay has occurred.

What did you do to resolve the delay?

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Member and Officer Joint Working

Mutual respect between Members and Officers is essential to good local government. These general principles apply to all relations involving Members and Officers;

- ✓ Members are responsible to the electorate - Members are not permitted to give instructions to Officers unless specifically authorised to do so by the Council, the Executive or a Committee.
- ✓ Officers are responsible to the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service, and to their respective Chief Officer – Officers will provide appropriate advice and support to Members with impartiality and in an equitable manner.

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Help us to help you

Underlying principles for all Member and Officer relations:-

- ✓Mutual respect between Members and Officers;
- ✓Working relationships to be professional and both parties to act with courtesy;
- ✓Show respect and consideration for others;
- ✓Do not do anything which comprises, or which is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of the Council;
- ✓Do not disclose confidential information or information which should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential nature without express consent;
- ✓Have regard to relevant advice of Officers when reaching decisions.

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Dealing with Casework effectively

Identify what the issue is – establish the facts and find out how your constituent wants you to help.

Refer the enquiry to the appropriate service – communicate direct with Officers or record your enquiry on the CRM for effective performance management.

Provide feedback – after initial enquiries let the constituent know what you are doing and keep them up to date, especially if the issue will take longer than 10 working days to resolve.

Consider wider issues – reflect on the issues and let others know e.g. similar concerns may suggest that an issue needs to be dealt with by a new or revised policy

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Table Discussion 2

Thinking about your experience of representing constituents and working with Council services;

1. Identify positive examples of case reporting and management

2. Identify opportunities to improve the effective management of cases

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Developments

CRM “dashboard”

- ✓Real-time performance data
- ✓Management performance tool
- ✓Ward information

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Questions

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